

The Narrative in Architecture

A design tool for the deployment of a spatiality.

Albane Grimont

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Groupe de suivi: Jo Taillieu,
Marco Bakker, Axel Chevroulet



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Foreword

1 Sergei M Eisenstein, *The Psychology of Composition*, series editor Jay Leyda (A Methuen Paperback, 1944). 11

2 Eisenstein, *The Psychology of Composition*.

3 Lavigne et al., *Une Seconde d'éternité*.

4 Martin Heidegger (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy).

The *Enoncé Théorique* intends to explore perception of space jointly linked with the narrative behind it.

This research will take the form of an analytic journey through several case studies, in order to decipher their architecture's narrative.

The phenomenological approach of space from Heidegger to Merleau-Ponty, and its physical transcription by artists like Roni Horn, entice us to question both, the meaning of our presence in the world, and the origin of our consciousness of each space we are evolving in.

On the one hand, the experience that we make of the world is personal to each individual. The "*sensuous thought*"¹ affects the way we perceive our environment. The consciousness we have of what we are experiencing is influenced by the weight of our life's past events, and by the different steps of our social construction.² Time can be considered as a succession of past, present and future sensations that sometimes interfere.³

On the other hand, the experience we have of the world is inextricably bound up with the notion of spatiality. Heidegger, with the philosophy of *dasein* (i.e. "there-being"), invites human beings, in their experimentation of the world, to be open with their bodies. Experimenting a certain space constructs the space itself. A space's quality is thus defined by the entities that reside inside and by the connections they have with each other.⁴ Us, as subjects, cannot be separated from the objects.

The interrelation and solidarity between the observer and the observed can create a confusion between liabilities and assets. In that manner, Merleau-Ponty insists on the importance of our body in the world. The interaction our body has with its context turns it into part of its fabric.⁵

*“Gearing of the subject into his world is the origin of Space.”*⁶

Those phenomenological thoughts paved the way to acknowledging the notion of interaction as a fundamental principle that defines space. According to Heidegger, everything is linked, and nothing can be considered as an individual entity. The distance between entities defines them. The relationship several entities have with each other construct their identities. Indeed, the position of items in space, endows them of a specific value. As a matter of fact, the symbolic of elements depends on what they are associated with. Every component of the world has a complex identity. In her artwork, the artist Roni Horn materializes her conception of interaction as the identity of a space’s components. She says of her work that at every different exhibition, its perception changes. Her artwork interacts with the space where it is arranged. The interactions the objects have with the ambiance of the place, its architecture, its history, the light, the visitors... change the way they are seen and felt. She makes the objects interact with their surroundings, in order to create a specific landscape.⁷

In fact, our relationship to space depends on our inner position inside it, but also

5 Merleau-Ponty, *L’œil et l’esprit*,” France Culture, January 29, 2018.

6 Merleau-Ponty quoted by Hale, “Merleau-Ponty for Architects | Jonathan Hale | Taylor & Francis EBooks.”

7 Bourse de Commerce — Pinault Collection, “L’interview de Roni Horn.”

8 Rinceur quoted by Lavigne et al., Une
Seconde d'éternité. 10

on the position of the elements surrounding us. Our distance to the components of the space, we find ourselves in, constructs the perception we have of it. The sensation we have of a space is ephemeral – it is felt solely at one specific moment in time, where all components are arranged at a specific distance from each other. This consideration questions the creative process of architecture. The space is constantly evolving, it can never be immutable. For Paul Rinceur, “*time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative.*”⁸ – in our case, the architect suggests a way of experiencing the world, by articulating it under a narrative of his choosing. This narrative is destined for individuals experiencing the space, to understand better the prevalent role of interaction, as well as gaining deeper awareness of their presence inside the space.

Introduction

9 Alberti quoted by Greenstein, "On Alberti's 'Sign': Vision and Composition in Quattrocento Painting." 669.

The analysis of our presence in the world, according to the phenomenological consideration of Merleau-Ponty, show that the organization and architecture of a certain space propose a specific understanding of what surrounds us.

When Alberti, in 1435, studies the process of creation, he states that the organization of creation, of the whole, ensue from a narrative, so called *historia*.

*"Composition is the rule of painting by which the parts are brought together to form a pictorial work. The greatest work of painting is not a colossus, but historia. For the praise of ingenuity is greater in historia, than in a colossus. The part of a historia are bodies, part of the body is a member, part of a member is a surface. Thus, the prime parts of the work are surfaces, because from them come members, from the members come the bodies and from those comes the historia, indeed the ultimate."*⁹

Through the cinematic prism of Eisenstein, the architectural theory of Luigi Morretti and the phenomenological approach of Merleau-Ponty, we will define narrative development and its generative force of spatiality.

How is a narrative, as a design tool, developed to build spatiality in architectural work?

First, we will focus on defining a narrative. Then, we will take a closer look at a narrative's organization principles in the case of architectural work. Finally, through drawings, we will analyze the construction of a narrative in four case studies.

Theoretical Guide

The narrative

Narrative¹⁰

Noun

A story or a description of a series of events.

A particular way of explaining or understanding events.

Adjective

Telling a story or describing a series of events.

¹⁰ Cambridge Dictionary, "Narrative Definition"

Story

Explaining

Series

Event

The association of those four terms defines the narrative. We will consider the narrative as a process of organization.

11 Cambridge Dictionary, “Story Definition”

12 Cambridge Dictionary, “Explain Definition”

13 “Series Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary at OxfordLearners-Dictionaries.Com.”

14 Cambridge Dictionary, “Event Definition”

Story (*Noun*)¹¹

A description, either true or imagined, of a connected series of events.

A report in a newspaper or on a news broadcast that has happened.

An explanation of why something happened, which may not be true.¹⁰

To explain (*Verb*)¹²

To make something clear or easy to understand by describing or giving information about it.

To explain is also to give a reason for doing something.¹¹

Series (*Noun*)¹³

Several events or things of a similar kind that happen one after the other.

Event (*Noun*)¹⁴

Anything that happens, especially something important or unusual

An event is also one particular group of outcomes among all possible outcomes when experimenting with probability .

An activity that is planned for a special purpose and usually involves a lot of people, for example, a meeting, a party, trade show, or conference.

The narrative in architecture

The narrative is the guideline of a creative process. It is a design tool used for its organization function. We can argue that, from the creation emerges (even if unintentional) an intuition, a stance, because of an underlying narrative. However, Eisenstein asserts that the choice of a methodic characteristic is not universal. For him, it comes from a period of time, a group of people, a tendency, and often hides an activist's thought.¹⁵ While Alberti talks about the organization of his paintings' compositions, in a symmetric way, in his films, Eisenstein views the process of montage, as the organization of a series of images.¹⁶ They both serve the same purpose: organizing a landscape in order to propose a vision. Merleau-Ponty suggests that the painter, through his art, reveals the order of the world.

“A world in which regions of space are separated by the time it takes our gaze to move from one to the other, a world in which being is not given but rather emerges over time.”¹⁷

For instance, the paintings of Cezanne aim to expose a landscape's perception, meaning that they show their contemplators, how their environment appears to them. As they look closer, they will then get a feeling of incompleteness from these paintings.¹⁸

Likewise, in cinema, Eisenstein emphasizes the role of montage as the assembling of fragments, in order to produce spatiality. For him, St Pierre's Baldachin shows that the real image is understandable only with the sequential juxtaposition of all

15 Eisenstein, *The Psychology of Composition*. 13

16 “Sequences in Architecture: Sergei Eisenstein and Luigi Moretti, from *Images to Spaces*,” Taylor & Francis, n.d.

17 Merleau-Ponty quoted in “The World of Perception.”

18 “Merleau-Ponty, *L'œil et l'esprit*.”

19 “Sequences in Architecture: Sergei Eisenstein and Luigi Moretti, from Images to Spaces.”

20 Moretti quoted in “Sequences in Architecture: Sergei Eisenstein and Luigi Moretti, from Images to Spaces.”

Thus, the montage allows to “*sequentially understand the phenomena.*”¹⁹

Furthermore, architect Luigi Moretti considers that a space is architected by the “emotional course that their sequences suggest to us”²⁰, he views sequential order as the essence of architecture.

Sequence

Settings

Moments

Elements

To this extent, we will apply the notion of narrative to architecture as a design tool. The interaction of elements at a specific time creates moments. A specific moment in time can be considered as the event of a narrative. A particular way of explaining this series of events, is by using settings, as certain connectors that link given moments together in a sequence.

The development of the architectural narrative

Elements

If we refer to Alberti's quote, mentioned in the introduction, the creative process, in the case of painting, is to organize a specific relationship between fragmented elements. It leads to what he calls *historia*.²¹ We can consider that in our terms, *historia* is the narrative behind the creative process. To this extent, we need to capture the elements that are at the genesis, to be able to understand the roots of the narrative and what starts the design process. we need to extract the primitive elements of the narrative.

*"From living perception to abstract thought."*²²

21 Greenstein, "On Alberti's 'Sign': Vision and Composition in Quattrocento Painting." 669.

22 V. I. Lenine quoted by Eisenstein, *The Psychology of Composition*. 56

Moment

- 23 Eisenstein, *The Psychology of Composition*. 26
- 24 "Merleau-Ponty, *L'œil et l'esprit*."

When elements are linked together, specific moments are created. The relationship at stake between two elements gives them their inner value. Juan Gris affirms that in his process of creation, if he has at first two distinct surfaces (one black, the other white), when these two surfaces interact with each other, one becomes the shadow of the other.²³ The level of tension that we feel in a space is specific to a particular moment and position. Looking at the swimming pool's tiles, Merleau-Ponty tell us how he perceives the object. The value of the tiles is inherent to their context. He grasps the tiles through the interference of the water, the light, the wind moving the water and the pines around reflecting their shadows.²⁴ Our presence, our specific position, the presence of particular elements, and all elements of a momentary context, create the perception we have of a space.

Settings

Along the creative process, series of moments are organized to create a sequence

The settings are the tools that bring parts of the narrative together.

For instance, in literature, stylistic devices (e.g. concrete thought, allegory, personification, rhythmization, ...) are tools among others that permit to express an idea or a thematic. Edgar Allan Poe claims he uses stylistic devices as "*pivot upon which the whole structure might turn.*"²⁵ The filmmaker applies the same method during the montage. He defines his own parameters. The way he chooses to organize the frames creates the story.²⁶ Different montages of the same footage convey different stories. For Luigi Moretti, four parameters structure the successive volumes composing spatial sequence: the geometrical shape, the amount of absolute volume, the density according to the quantity of light, and the pressure or energetic charge according to the proximity.²⁷

25 Poe quoted by Eisenstein, *The Psychology of composition*, p.31

26 "Sequences in Architecture: Sergei Eisenstein and Luigi Moretti, from *Images to Spaces*."

27 "Sequences in Architecture: Sergei Eisenstein and Luigi Moretti, from *Images to*

Sequence

28 "Moretti quoted in "Sequences in Architecture: Sergei Eisenstein and Luigi Moretti, from Images to Spaces."

29 "Sequences in Architecture: Sergei Eisenstein and Luigi Moretti, from Images to Spaces."

As a matter of fact, we can consider a sequence as a whole. It is the result of elements' interaction at particular moments in time, during which these moments connect, according to specific settings. When Luigi Moretti does an architectural analysis, the sequence is the merging point.

*"I would like to limit this investigation to spatial unities formed by interior volumes that are composed in a certain order and that constitute in their succession with changing perspectival effects and in relation to the courses and times necessary and possible for viewing them, a true sequence in the actual meaning of the term. Of these volumes, coordinated in unity, I intend to clarify the modalities of their succession and, therefore, the structure of their composition; that is, their type and the reasons for the condemnation of their volume."*²⁸

This statement is thus in line with Eisenstein's thoughts, for whom, a framing alone has no meaning. The framings' organization, according to a sequential juxtaposition, makes the real image, the narrative, understandable.²⁹ Therefore, the sequential organization of elements and moments, through settings, characterize the spatial perception of an architectural work.

Case Studies

Application of a methodology

Through different technics of drawing, we are going to analyze four works of architecture, coming from different architectural practices, in order to understand concretely how a narrative develops a project. The subsequent study will concern:

Casa Avelino Duarte, Alvaro Siza Veira

Fase, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker

Katsura Place

Museum for a Small City, Richard Venlet

The same methodology is adopted in the four case studies. The first step is to extract characteristic moments. The second, is to use the abstraction process, in order to get a better understanding of the elements at stake. The third step is to define the settings that sequentially connect the moments, to obtain the work's constitutive narrative.

Finally, we can draw a pattern between the different architectural works, since all four are constructed around the use or non-use of similar settings. Addition, modularity, superposition, permeation, fragmentation, and rotation are the ones retained according to the project reviewed. Although the four scenarios develop their project with the same range of settings but varying their combination, it is understood that this list is not exhaustive. The quality of the sequence is defined by the usage of these settings. The level of use of each setting, as well as the additional elements peculiar to each project, ensure spatial specificity.

Casa Avelino Duarte

Alvaro Siza Veira

1980-1984

The project that we are going to analyze is the one of the *Casa Avelino Duarte* from Alvaro Siza built in Ovar in Portugal between 1980 and 1984. From the outside, the house appears like an extruded volume on the plot. Fragmentation and complexity lie on the inside.³⁰

30 Alessandra Cianchetta and Enrico Molteni, *Alvaro Siza Private Houses 1954-2004*.

31 Croquis, Alvaro Siza 1958-2000 (El Croquis 68/69 + 95). 64

32 Curtis, Alvaro Siza: An Architecture of edges. Croquis, Alvaro Siza 1958-2000 (El Croquis 68/69 + 95).

33 Cianchetta and Molteni, Alvaro Siza Private Houses 1954-2004.

34 Siza quoted by Curtis, Alvaro Siza: An Architecture of edges. Croquis, Alvaro Siza 1958-2000 (El Croquis 68/69 + 95).

Elements

The space comprises all the primary elements of a house; partition, ceiling, and circulation. Siza provides specific attention to „Stair, wall, column, hearth – foreground the elemental dwelling“³¹ However, the domestic space and classic plan are fractured. Siza isolates certain interior parts for emphasis.³²

Settings

The organization of the partitions makes them interpenetrate. It creates specific framing, and the spaces are interlocking.³³ The marble materiality emphasized the stairs, the columns, and the hearth. The circulation suggests a rotation around these elements and guides the experience.

Moments

The settings define views that guide the visitor in his process. The converging and diverging lines create an ambiguity of perception. While the visitor is moving in the space, volumes are compressed and expanded, and our impression changes, endowing the elements of multiple identities.

„Thus, a wall plane which starts out as the front of something may float right through a project and reveal itself to be the back of something else.“³⁴

p.23, drawings obtained with felt on paper, from the original photograph:
Collovà Roberto. Casa Avelino Duarte, Ovar 1981-84. Photograph. In
Cianchetta, Alessandra, and Enrico Molteni. Alvaro Siza Private Houses 1954-2004, 215. Skira editor, 2004.

p.24, drawings obtained with felt on paper, from the original photograph:
Suzuki Hisao, Ferreira Alves Luis, Collovà Roberto. Casa Avelino Duarte. In
Croquis, El. Alvaro Siza 1958-2000 (El Croquis 68/69 + 95), 92-93, n.d. Madrid : El Croquis editorial, 2007

p.25, drawings obtained with felt on paper, from the original photograph:
Suzuki Hisao, Ferreira Alves Luis, Collovà Roberto. Casa Avelino Duarte. In
Croquis, El. Alvaro Siza 1958-2000 (El Croquis 68/69 + 95), 92-93, n.d.

p.26, drawings obtained with felt on paper, from the original photograph:
Suzuki Hisao, Ferreira Alves Luis, Collovà Roberto. Casa Avelino Duarte. In
Croquis, El. Alvaro Siza 1958-2000 (El Croquis 68/69 + 95), 92-93, n.d.

p.27, drawings obtained with felt on paper, from the original photograph:
Collovà Roberto. Casa Avelino Duarte, Ovar 1981-84. Photograph. In
Cianchetta, Alessandra, and Enrico Molteni. Alvaro Siza Private Houses 1954-2004, 215. Skira editor, 2004.



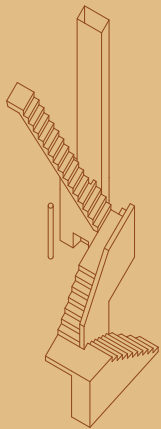






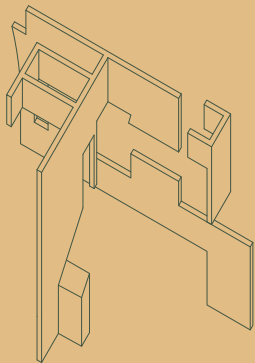


Narrative of articulation



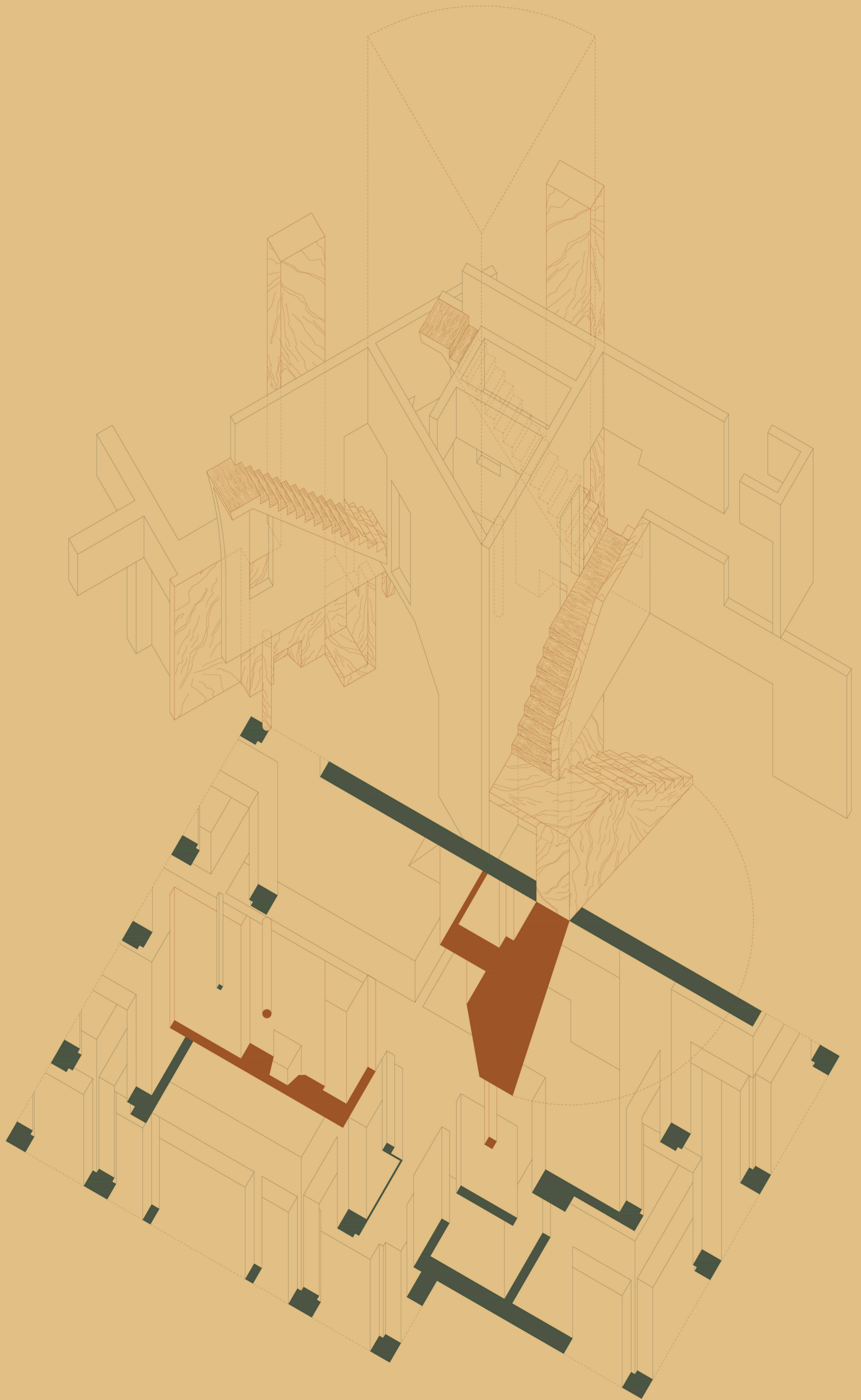
→ **Fragmentation**
→ **Rotation**

→ emphasis
→ guideline
→ multiple identities
→ ambiguity of perceptions



→ **Permeation**

→ framing
→ ground-figure's complexity
→ distension



Fase

Anne Theresa de Keersmaecker
1982

This case study focuses on the organization of the narrative in the *Piano Phase* of the film adaptation of the performance *Fase*, four movements to the music of Steve Reich in 1982.³⁵ *Fase* is the genesis of Theresa De Keersmaecker's choreographic work. Arising from a radical simplicity. The name of the performance refers directly to the physical phenomenon of phase, relative to waves occurring at the same frequency. The derivation of a basic principle gives an intense complexity to the sequence.³⁶

*"This landscape of extreme order and total anarchy."*³⁷

35 "Fase, Four Movements to the Music of Steve Reich," Rosas, December 23, 2022.

36 "En retournant le sablier..." La Monnaie / De Munt, November 8, 2018.

37 De Keersmaecker quoted in "En retournant le sablier..."

38 De Keersmaecker quoted in “En retournant le sablier...”

39 “Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker, Fase - MaCulture.fr,” n.d.

40 “En retournant le sablier...”

41 Reich quoted in “En retournant le sablier...”

Elements

The display is about two dancers executing simple primary movements “*Spinning, jumping, swinging the arms. Then walking.*”³⁸ The choreography complements the metric music of Steve Reich and lighting effects. The three elements enhance each other.

Settings

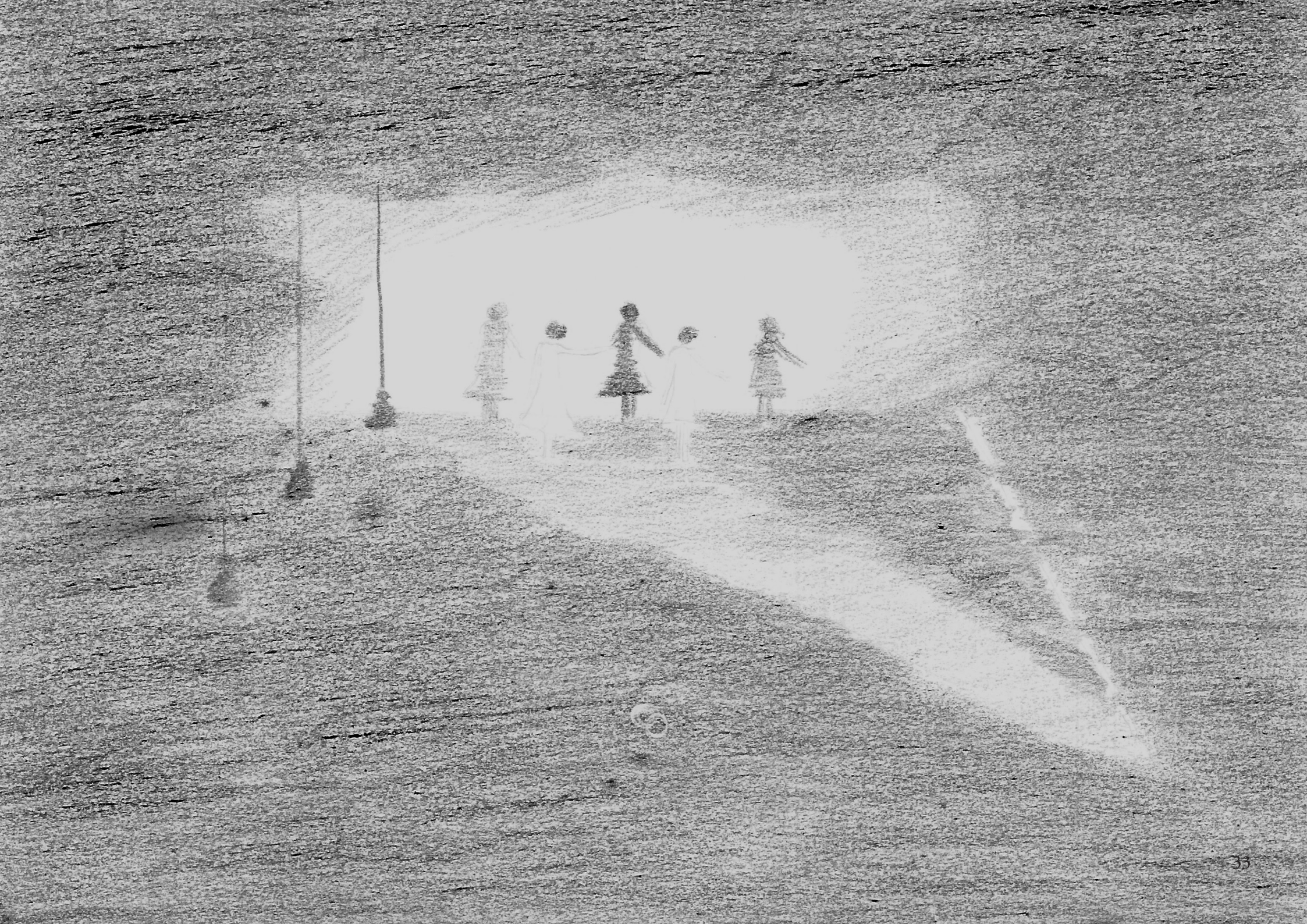
At first sight, the display relies on the repetition of musical, structural, and gestural patterns. The movements are performed in a fast succession. However, variations endow the serial principle. A soft, gradual desynchronization occurs along the repetition.³⁹ The dancers evolve in a canon form. The superposition of the dancer’s shadows, given by the light effects, emphasis the phase difference. It creates interferences and generate a spatial confusion invested of a ground-figure complexity.⁴⁰

Moments

The additive process of the structure makes the sequence evolve gradually, developing the elements through different scales. Without stopping the process, the intervals resulting from the desynchronization seem to suspend the moments. Referring to his music, Steve Reich suggests that “*by limiting oneself to a small amount of material organized in a simple, gradual and uninterrupted process, the listener can focus attention on details that usually escape him.*”⁴¹

The moments succeed one another in a fluid continuity. The subtle phase differences tangle the movements and act on their permeation. The moments are unique, just like the instantaneous character of time. Their succession gradually reveals the display’s spatiality.

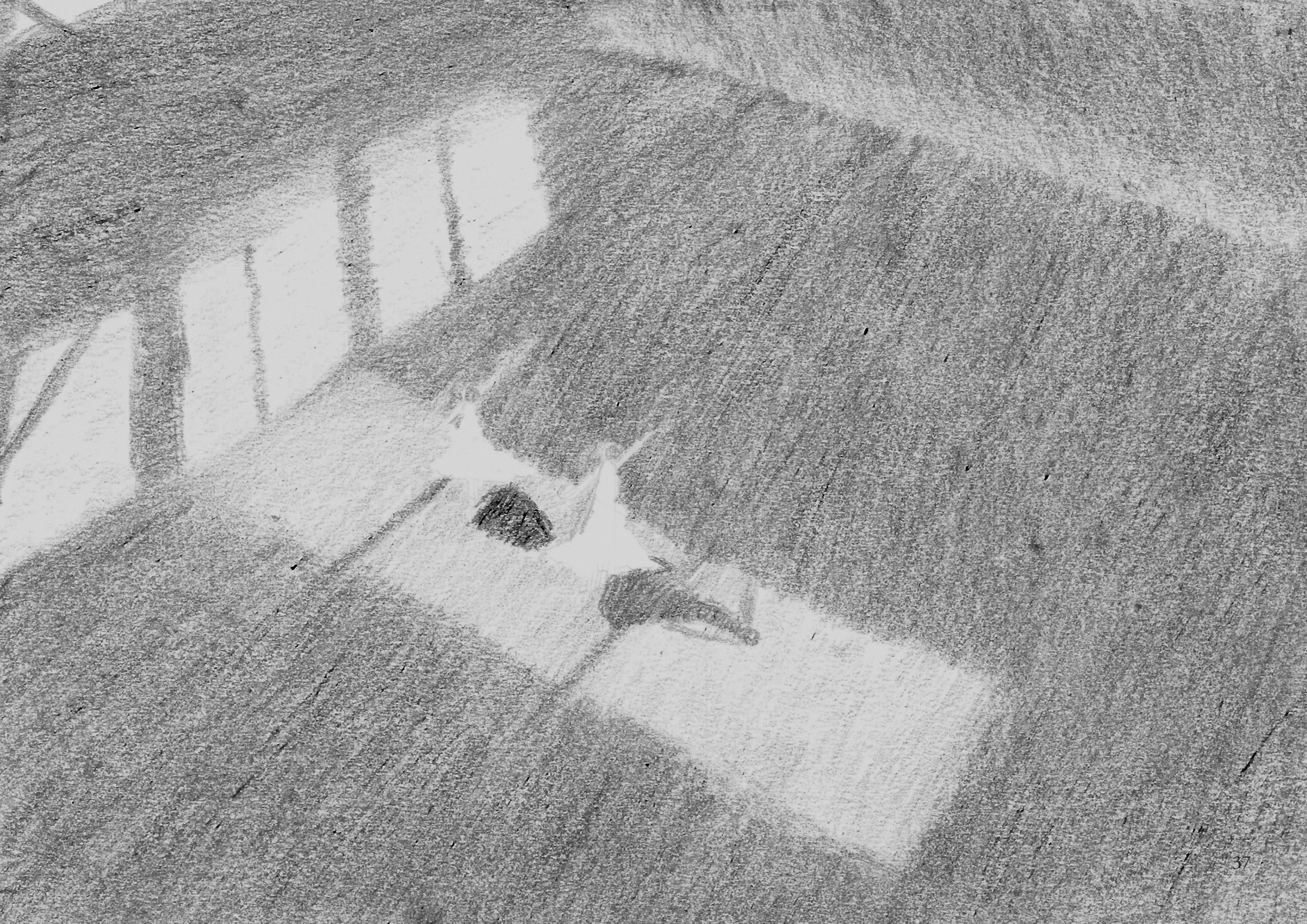
p. 26-33, drawings obtained with pastel on paper, from the original video:
De Mey Thierry. *Fase, Four Movements to the Music of Steve Reich*. 1982. Video. Youtube. October 20, 2022.







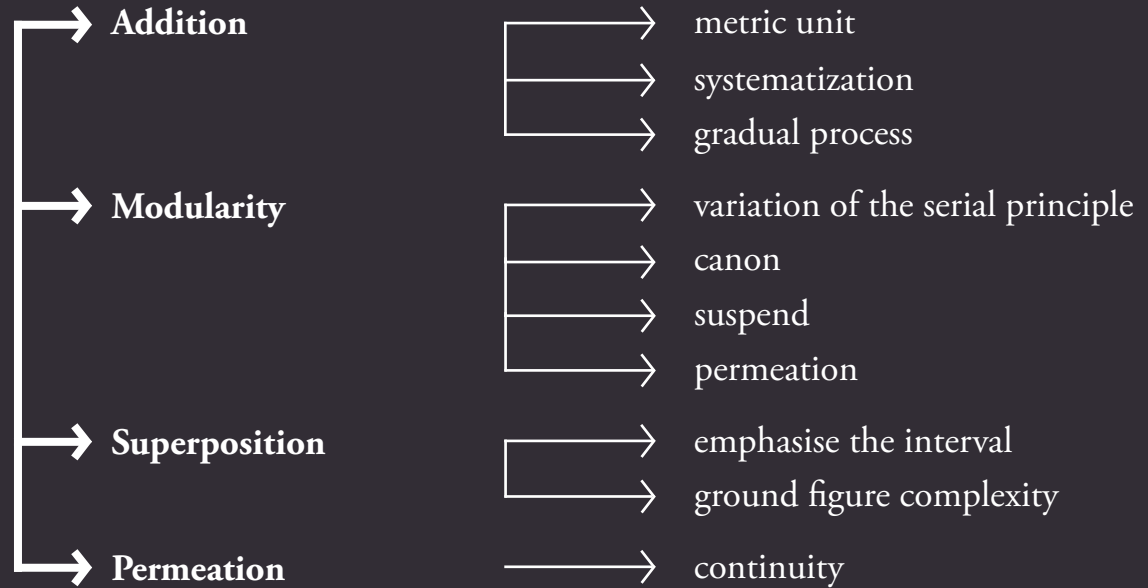
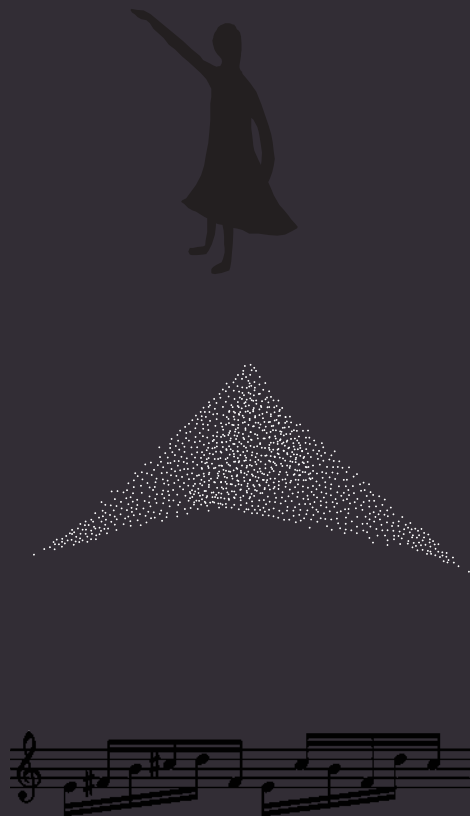


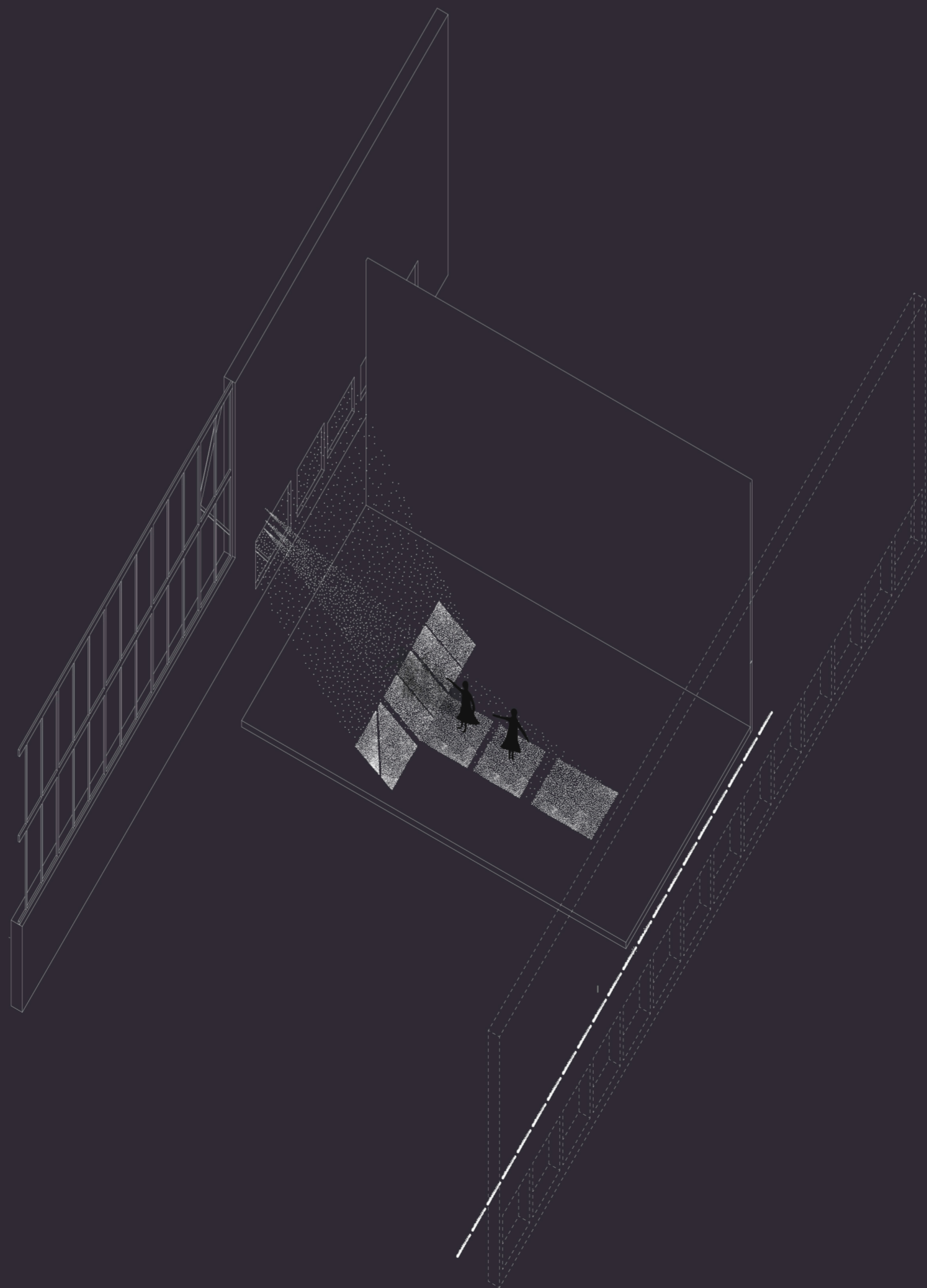
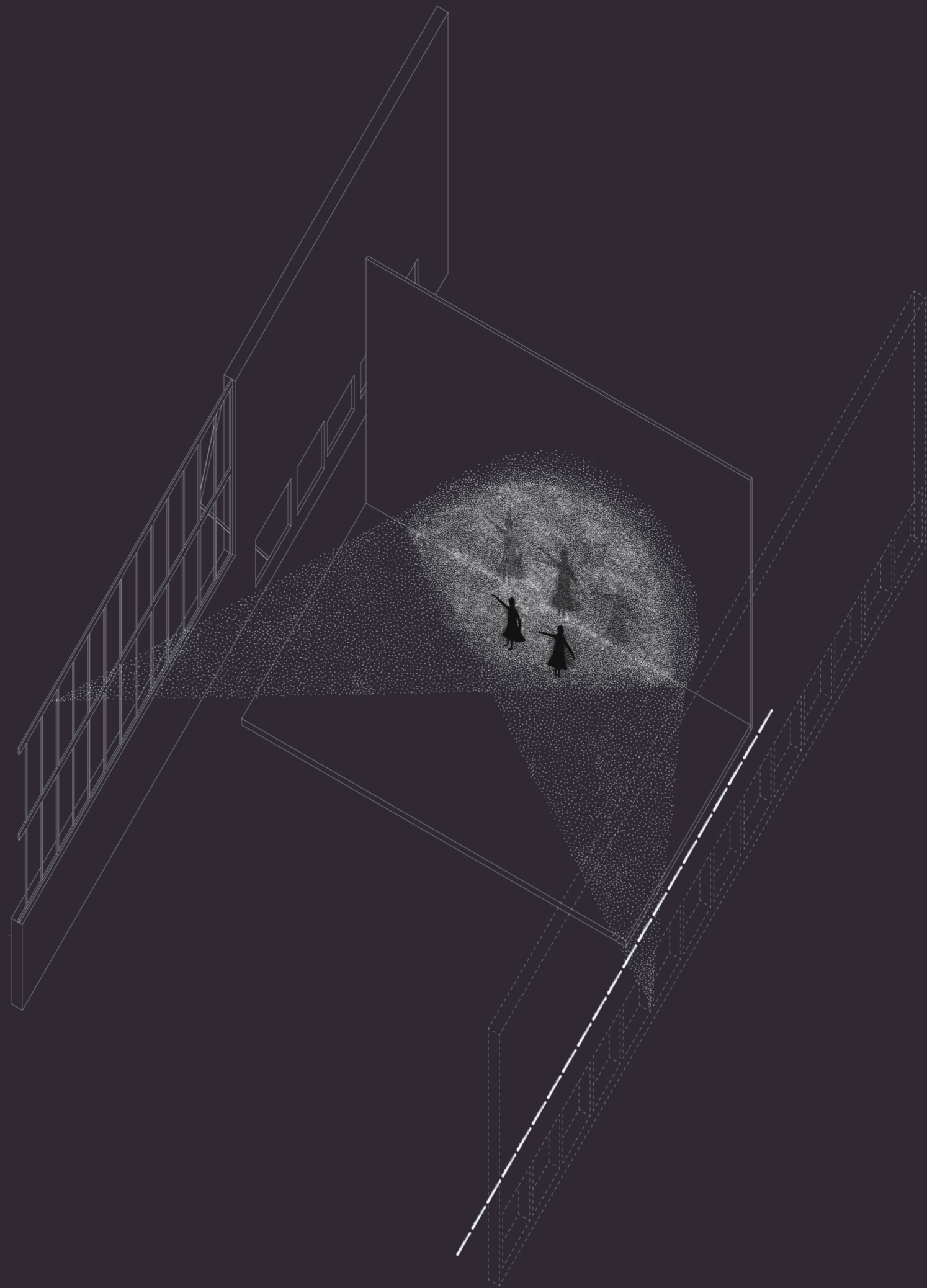






Narrative of interference





Katsura Palace

Request of the prince Hachijō Toshihito
1616-1658

The architecture of *Katsura Palace* arises from the conflict between two divergent Japanese philosophies. It combines the aristocratic culture of the imperial court of the ancient culture, characterized by the Formal aesthetic balance of the Yayoi culture, and the vital energy of the working class.⁴² The whole complex has been constructed in three different phases. The following analysis focuses on the old Shoin, the first part erected after 1616. Characteristic of Japanese culture, we will analyze a creative process where each element cannot be considered separately from the others and where the continuity of the sequence takes precedence over the plastic unity of the whole.⁴³

42 Kenzo Tange et al., *Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture*, 1ST ed. (Yale University, 1961, 1960).

43 Tange et al., *Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture*, 1960. 10

44 Tange et al., Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture, 1960. 38

45 Tange et al., Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture, 1960. 39

46 J. Archit. Plann. "THE SPATIAL THEORY OF KENZO TANGE FOR THE KATSURA IMPERIAL VILLA,"

47 Tange et al., Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture. 38

Elements

The construction is generated by three composite elements. The geometrical post and beam structure fundament of the Yayoi spatial order⁴⁴ is arranged over the spatial unit of measurement given by the Tatamis. Movable partitions are combined into this structural system.

Settings

The structure of the space arises from a two-dimensional organization featured with a succession of planes. The additional process of structural elements builds the space, and their modularity creates different moments. Combination of movable partition act as a superposition of layers. The space reveals itself through its experimentation, the moments are permeating each other in a continuous flow.⁴⁵

Moments

The modularity of the elements frames the moments of the sequence. Their repetition, arising from the aesthetic systematization of the Yayoi spatial order, endows the moments of an aesthetic balance compared by modern architects to Mondrian's paintings.⁴⁶ However, the process of systematization fade at some points to galvanize the sequence. The permeation of motifs and textures implements a continuity of the moments in their succession. Thus, the experience of sequence is an evolution of perception.

*"There is a constant movement of space, a gentle shifting from place to place (...) never arrives at a conception of a plastic whole."*⁴⁷

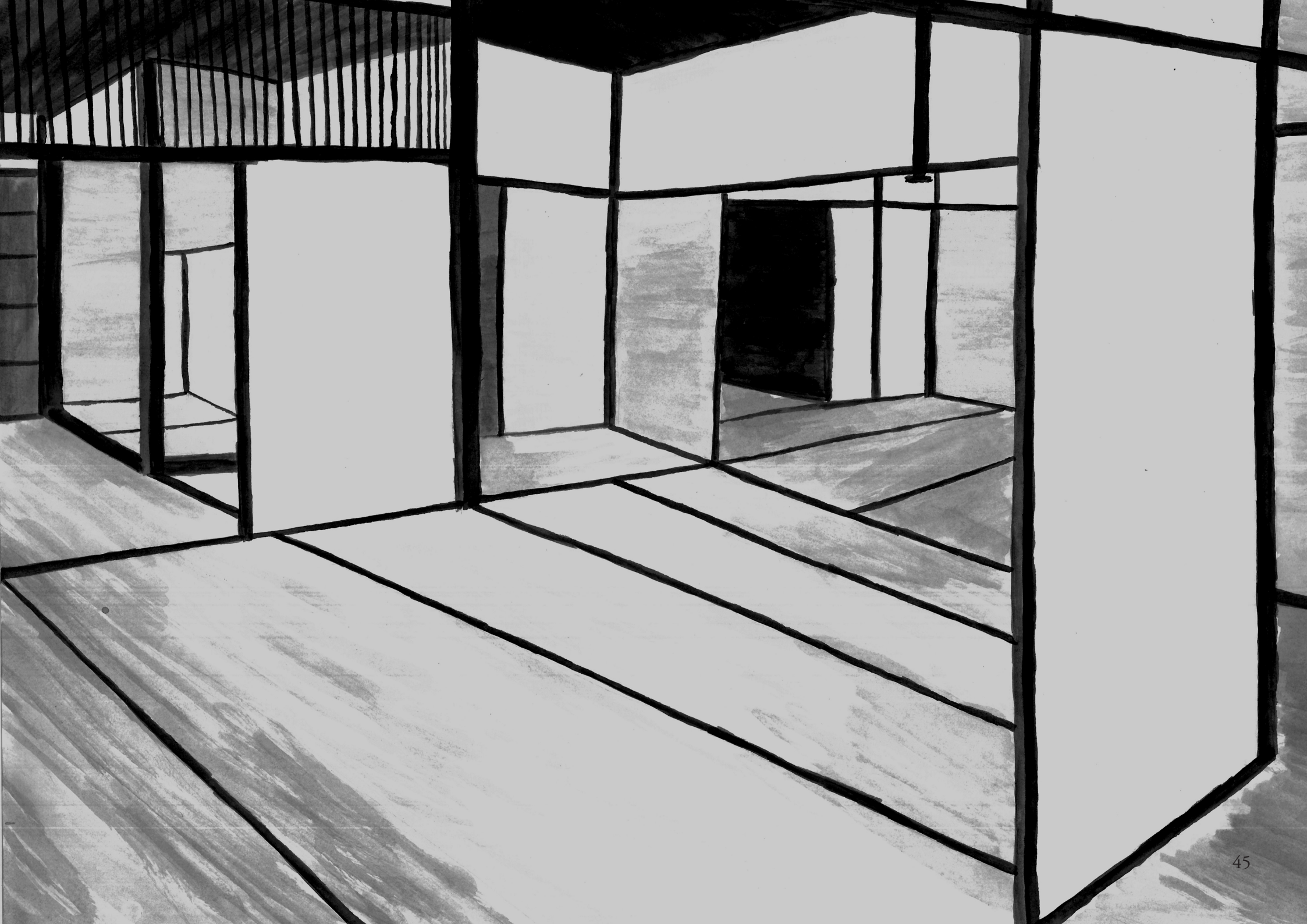
p.45, drawings obtained with Indian Ink on paper, from the original photograph:
Ishimoto Yasuhiro. *Interior of the Old Shoin seen from the east side of the Second Room*. Photograph. In Tange, Kenzo, Walter Gropius, Yasuhiro Ishimoto, and Herbert Bayer. *Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture*, 114-115. 1ST ed. Yale University, 1961, 1960.

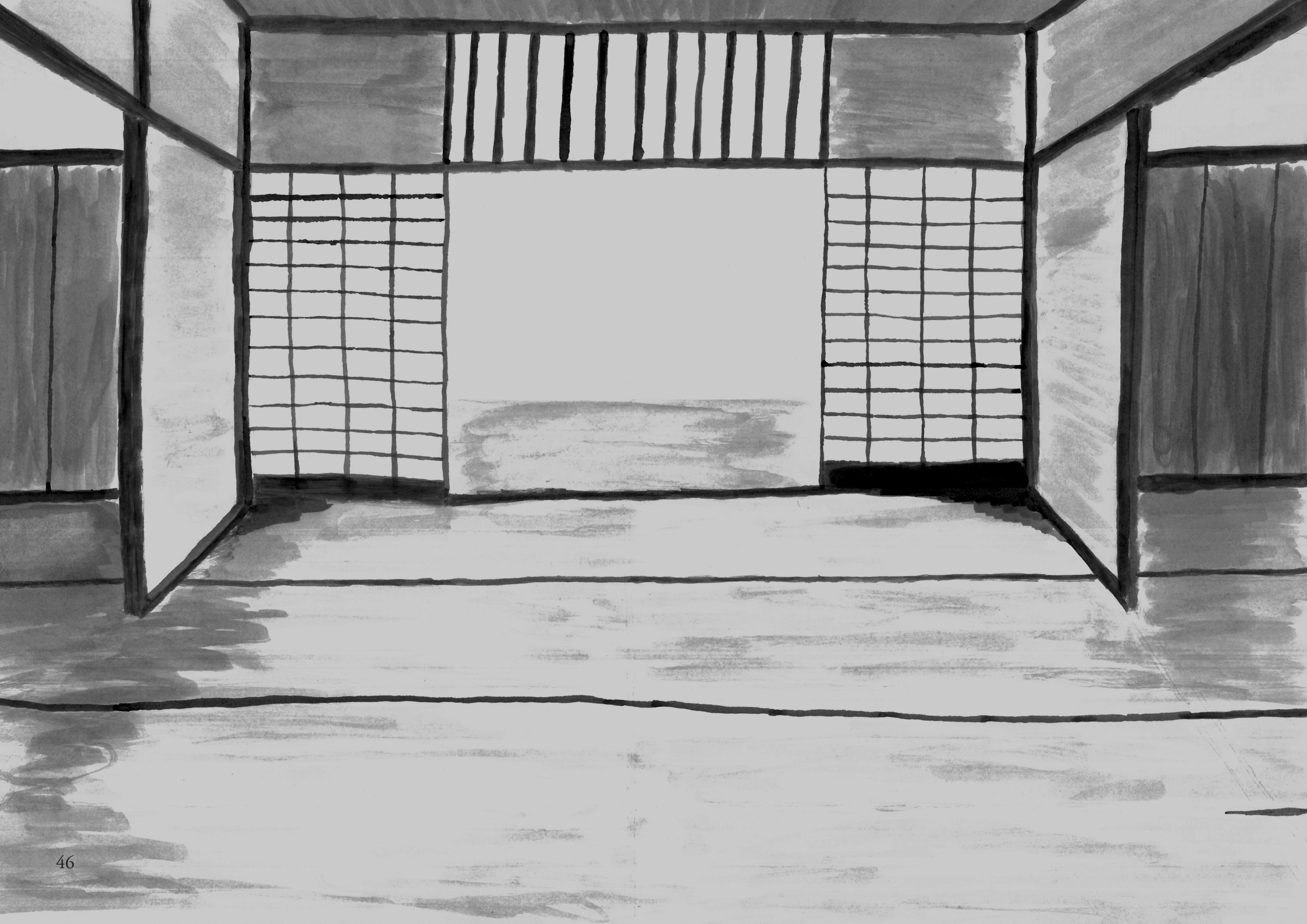
p.46, drawings obtained with Indian Ink on paper, from the original photograph:
Ishimoto Yasuhiro. *Moon-viewing Platform seen from the Second Room of the Old Shoin*. Photograph. In Tange et al., *Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture*, 1960. 10

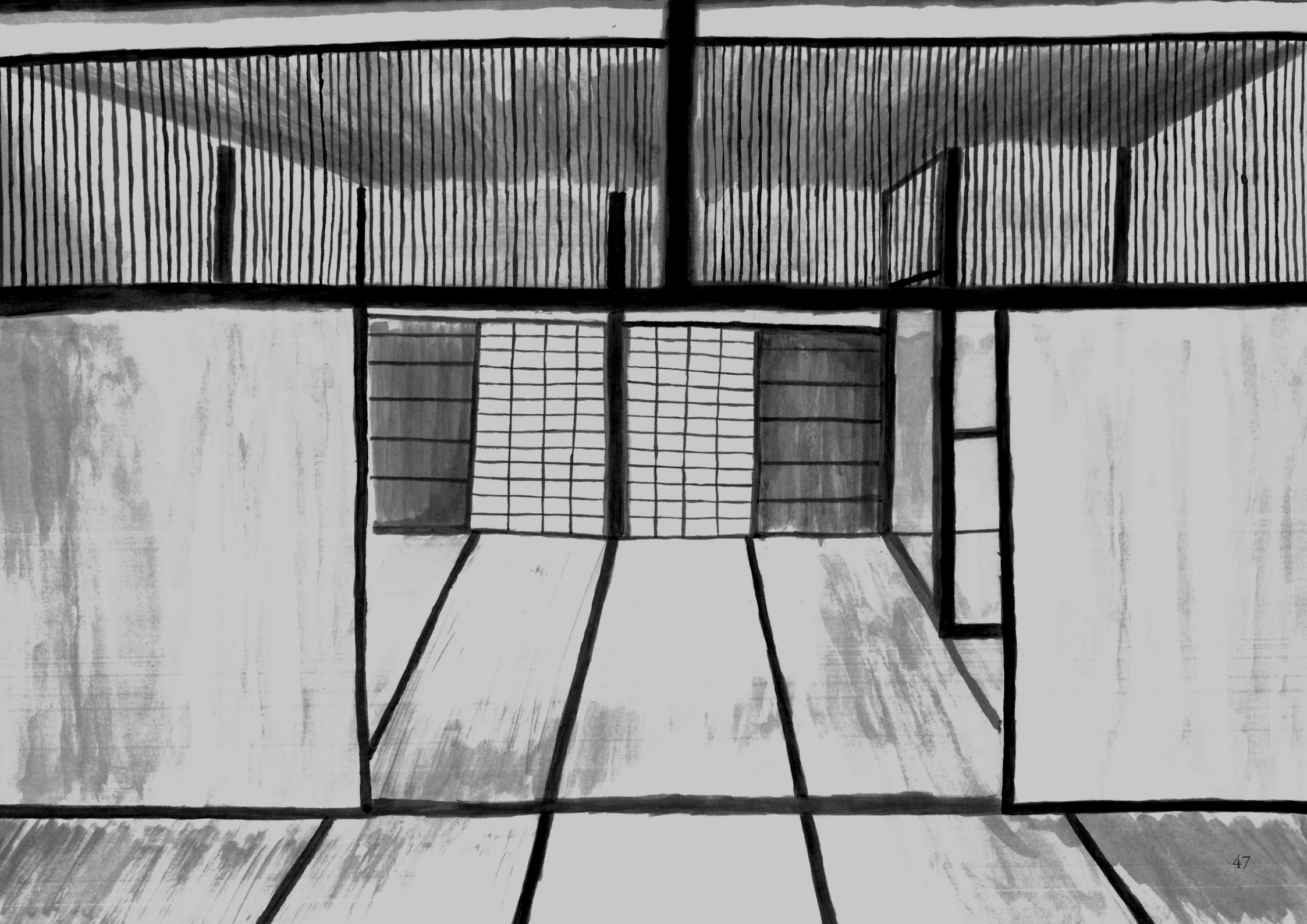
p.47, drawings obtained with Indian Ink on paper, from the original photograph:
Ishimoto Yasuhiro. *First Room of the Old Shoin seen from The second Room*. Photograph. In Tange et al., *Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture*, 1960. 10

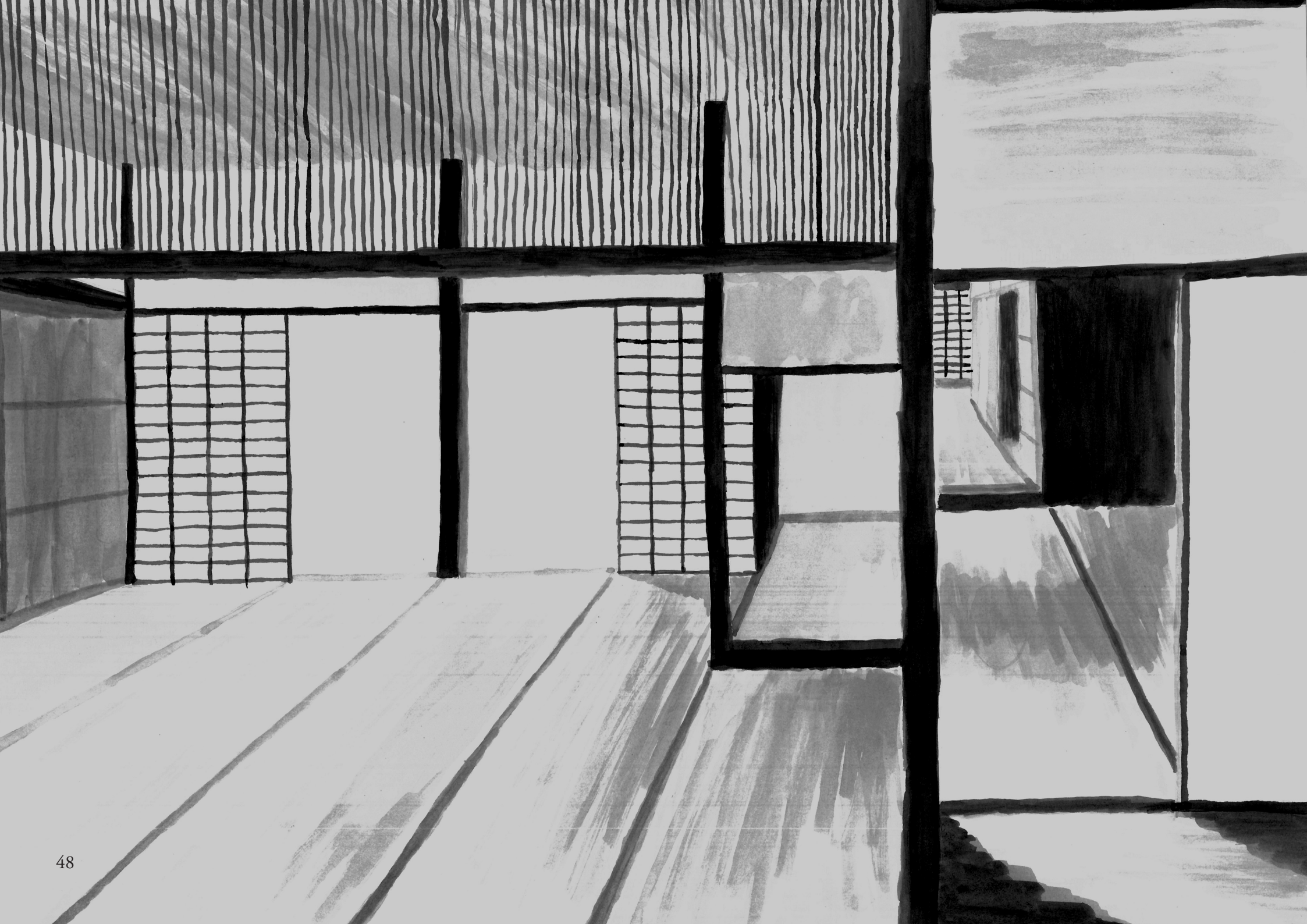
p.48, drawings obtained with Indian Ink on paper, from the original photograph:
Ishimoto Yasuhiro. *Middle Shoin seen from the First Room of the Old Shoin*. Photograph. In Tange et al., *Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture*, 1960. 10

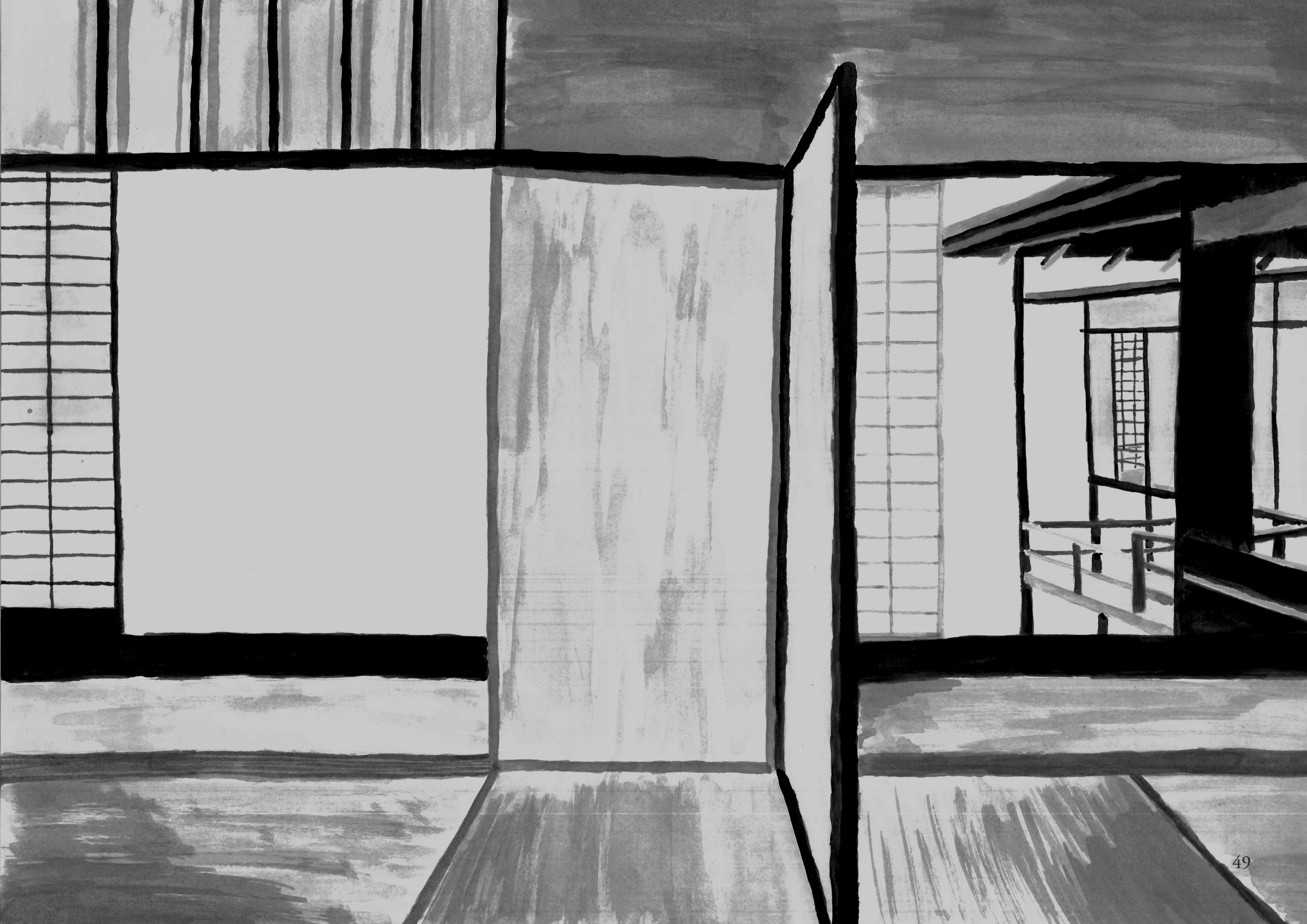
p.49, drawings obtained with Indian Ink on paper, from the original photograph:
Ishimoto Yasuhiro. *The New Palace and lawn seen from the Middle Shoin*. Photograph. In Tange et al., *Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture*, 1960. 10



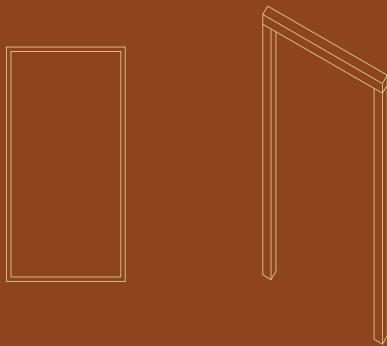






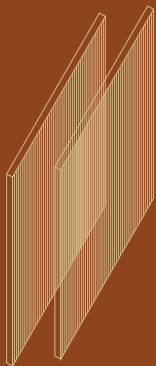


Narrative of continuity



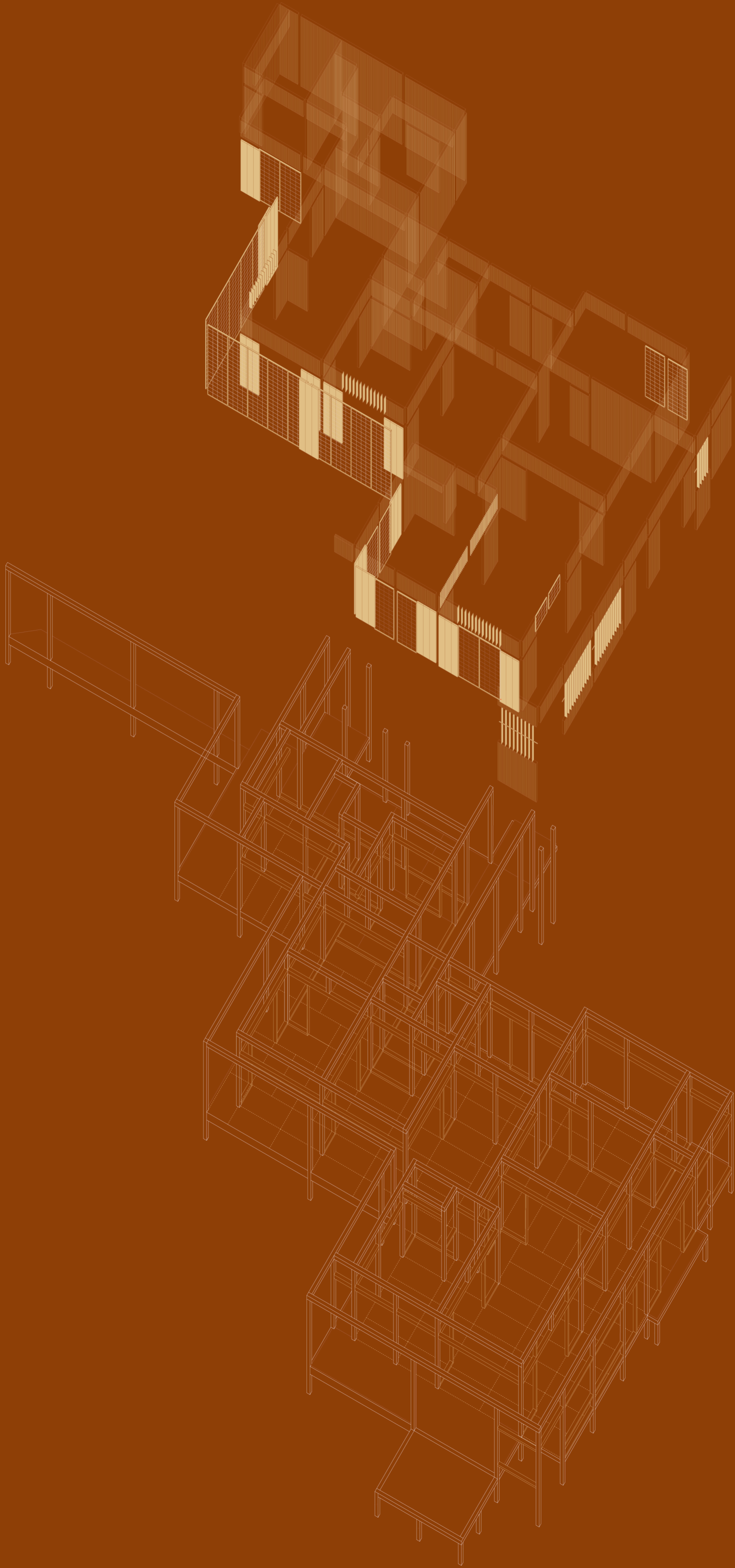
→ **Modularity**
→ **Rotation**

→ rythme
→ framing
→ systematization
→ formal balance



→ **Superposition**

→ permeation
→ ground-Figure's complexity



Museum for a small city

Richard Venlet
2013-2014

Richard Venlet usually put his work in relation to the ones of other artists, architects, and curators. He has the habit to question the function of the exhibition and the aim of the museum. The following analysis is about the project *Museum for a small City*, built in 2013 for the S.M.A.K in Ghent. It recalls an unrealized museum from Mies Van der Rohe in 1941-1943 eponymous of the project.⁴⁸

48 “Museum for a Small City / Rebuild by Richard Venlet,” SMAK, March 14, 2021.

49 “Robbrecht Desmet | Museum for a Small City.”

50 “Museum for a Small City / Rebuild by Richard Venlet.”

51 Lucan, Composition, Non-Composition: Architecture et Théories, XIXe - XXe Siècles

52 Rowe and Koetter, Collage City (The MIT Press).

Elements

The grid is the constitutive element of the project. It is materialized by 66 grey carpets. The platform hosts the changing collections of the S.M.A.K.. However, two sculptures from Franz West, Lemurenkopf I and Lemurenkopf II, remain.⁴⁹ He considers them as the chess piece to make the first move. All period of the exhibition is also punctuated with the organization of lectures, performances.⁵⁰

Settings

The exhibition is in constant evolution with the addition of other artworks over time. The modularity of the grid permits this aggregative disposal. The homogeneity of the landscape results from it. On the grid, the objects have an equivalent value.⁵¹ This neutrality enhances the inner value of each artwork. Even though there is no hierarchy between the objects, their presence in the space is characterized by the amount of void between them.

“the co-ordinates of a grid are awarded an equal impartiality. For, like the lines of longitude and latitude, it seems to be hoped that these will, in some way, eliminate any bias-even responsibility-in a specification of the infilling detail.”⁵²

Moments

The frequently changing constellation of objects materialized the temporality of the space. Moments are characterized by the exhibition of different artworks, the influx of visitors, and events such as lectures, conferences, performances.

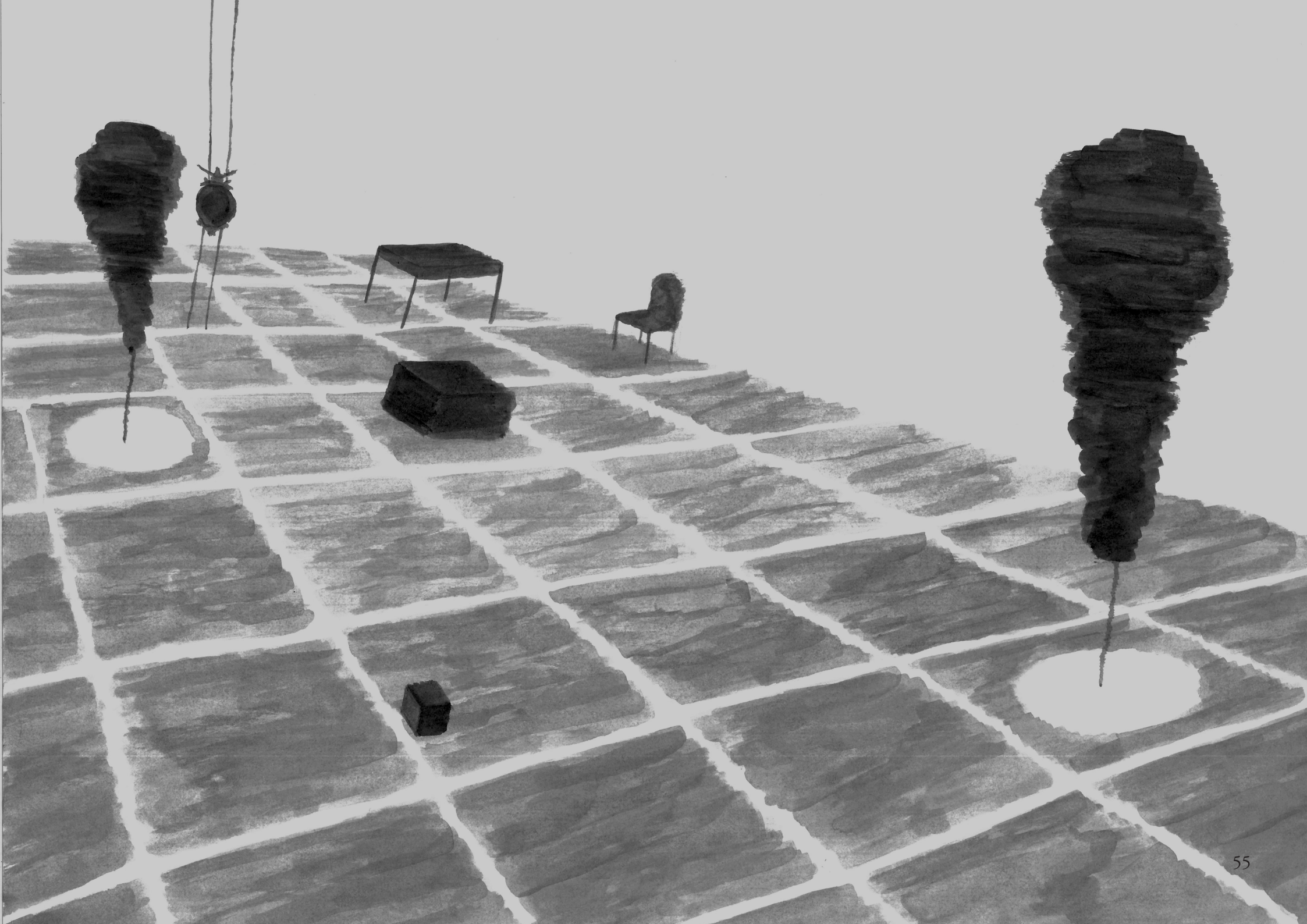
p.39, drawings obtained with Indian Ink on paper, from the original photograph:
Dirk Pauwels. Museum for a small city. Octobre 14, 2013. In Wordpress. "Museum for a Small City."

p.40, drawings obtained with Indian Ink on paper, from the original photograph:
Dirk Pauwels. Museum for a small city. Octobre 14, 2013. In Wordpress. "Museum for a Small City."

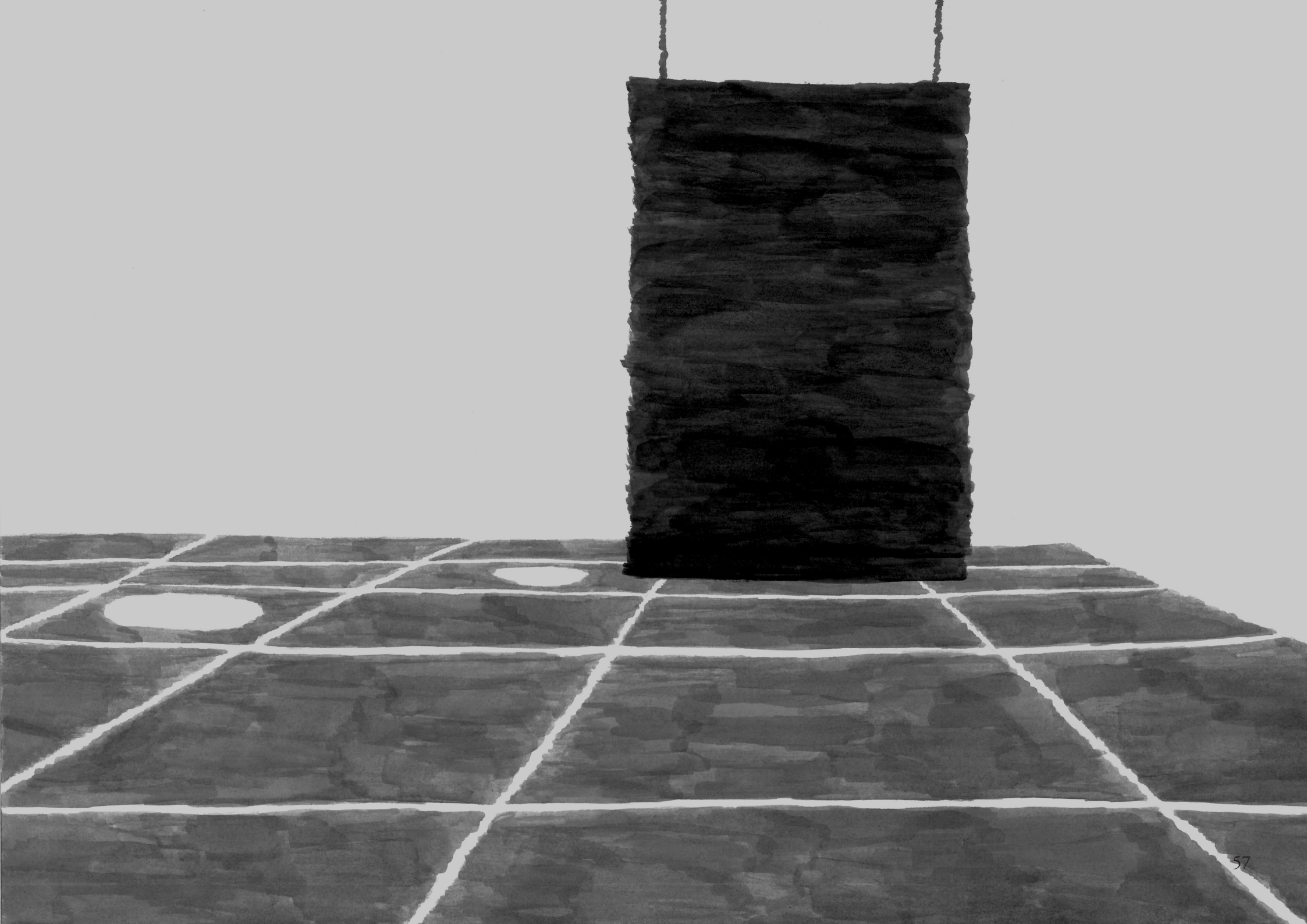
p.41, drawings obtained with Indian Ink on paper, from the original video
Robbrecht Desmet. *Museum for a small city - a project by Richard Venlet - Case 2 : « to enter a museum one has to the door » Geers & De Vylder*. 5 May 2014, Lieu : S.M.A.K, Ghent. Video. In Wordpress. "Museum for a Small City."

p.42, drawings obtained with Indian Ink on paper, from the original video:
Robbrecht Desmet. *Museum for a small city - a project by Richard Venlet - Case 3 : « Scale 1/1 » Verschaffel & Robbrecht*. 5 May 2014, Lieu : S.M.A.K, Ghent. Video. In Wordpress. "Museum for a Small City."

p.43, drawings obtained with Indian Ink on paper, from the original photograph:
Gyselincq Charlotte. *Museum for a small city*. 18 décembre 2013. Photograph. In Wordpress. "Museum for a Small City."



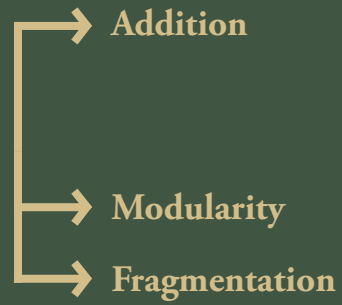
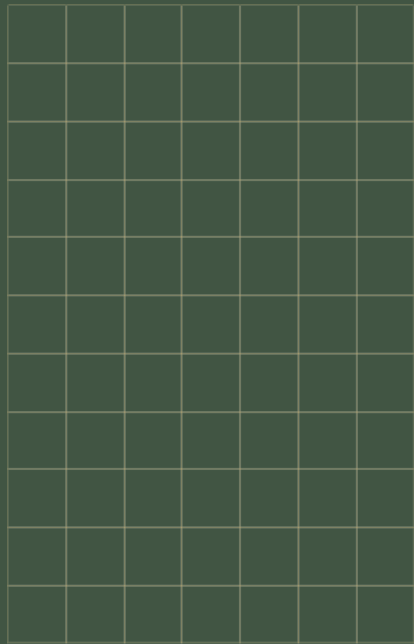








Narrative of homogeneity



The four case studies analyze the different architectural projects according to the narrative development principles. Determining the different moments of the sequence permit the definition of the project's root elements and of the settings that articulate the whole.

the four projects have different, sometimes even divergent narratives. However, the settings used in the development are frequently similar.

Addition is a common setting to *Katsura*, *Fase*, and *Museum for a small City*. It endows the three with a repetitive and systematic structure. This setting is used in parallel with **modularity**, implementing rhythm and temporality. But, if in *Fase* and *Katsura*, **modularity** permits the variation to the structure's serial principle, in Venlet's project, homogeneity is prioritized. **Modularity** in *Fase*, represented by the interval, leads to the **permeation** of the added elements. **Permeation** is also found in *Katsura*, due to the **superposition** of layers. Venlet, on the contrary, uses **modularity** in parallel with **fragmentation**. Individuality is chosen over the continuity of the interactions. Both last settings are confronted in the *Casa Avelino Duarte*. Siza employs **fragmentation**, not specifically to emphasize individuality, but to create quite the reverse, a hierarchy of the elements composing the house. He uses it to draw a guideline. **Permeation** articulates the fragmented elements to create a plastic unity, which is, even with the use of the same setting, unperceivable in *Katsura*.

Indeed, the simultaneous use of different settings, and their varying degrees of application, develop a different narrative with a different stance.

Considerations

53 Rowe and Koetter, *Collage City* (The MIT Press).

The study interprets the narrative as the guideline for the design process. The space is considered as an arrangement of several entities, where components influx on each other at a particular time. To that extent, the narrative defines a particular organization, creates relations between the elements, and reveals their underlying interactions. The existing contextual elements are the roots of the story. The narrative aims to arrange the connection of the elements, and influence the meaning of their interactions. Designing would be choosing a way to tell the story by using settings to define moments and influence the interaction of the components.

The parallel of the Casa Avelino Duarte, Fase, Katsura, and Museum for a Small City, shows that the same settings can be used in various projects with different intentions. The eclectic combination of those parameters, their degree of application, and the presence of external or internal contextual elements on which they are implemented produce different narratives.

The stance implied by the design process questions the legitimacy of the architect to articulate the story.

In the XXth century, Contemporary architects questioned the notion of composition (historically defined as the generator of the creative process) and its relevance. Streams of thoughts aroused, reacting against the hierarchy implied by the compositional method. Instead, the protagonists preferred homogeneity to provide "equal impartiality"⁵³ as described by Colin Rowe. The choice of a grid's additive system testifies to this statement. The neutrality of the process gives an order to the elements, which is not resulting from a compositive method. The order enables the

measurement of the individual and inner value of the components.⁵⁴ However, even if homogeneity does not arise from a compositional order, the use of settings such as addition, organizes the space. A commitment is made, a narrative is chosen, and an experience is suggested. The creative process remains in its organizational purpose, rather than the compositive method.

Space is not immutable; the sequence given by the narrative is in perpetual evolution. Architecture is not a built world, as experiencing the space is a momentary perception. Time changes the value of the space. The sequence evolves with the narrative's internal and external factors. As a palimpsest, its evolution through time marks the spatial identity. The narrative evolves and changes with its protagonists, the surrounding context, and historical events. Fluctuating the settings of the narrative fluctuates the identity of a landscape. Thus, each space has a capacity to evolve. Choosing settings and suggesting interactions means proposing an identity, a progress of the quality of the environment. It guides the user and offers an experience.

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